

LIBERATOR

Vol 9 No 12

DECEMBER 1969 35c

"Only Following Orders"

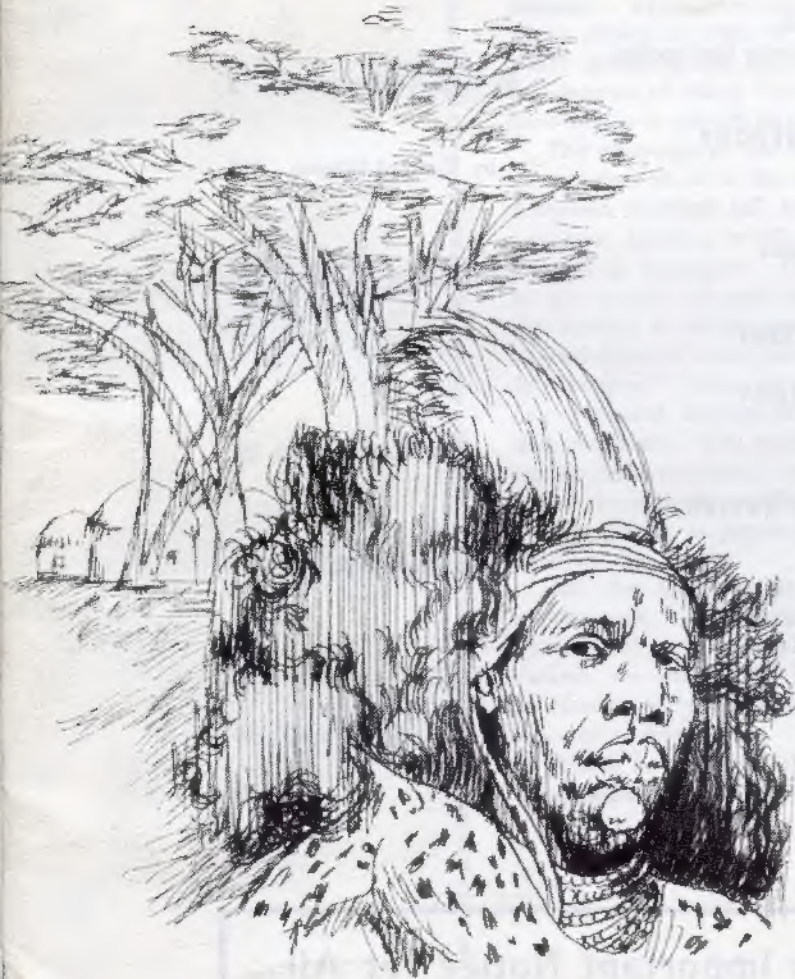
Editorial

LD C
FILE ROOM
NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

A Humanistic Democracy

Theatre Review

CLAYTON RILEY



LOIMOS
Short Story



LIBERATOR

Vol 9 No 12 December 1969

LIBERATOR: Copyright 1969, by the Afro-American Research Institute, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is strictly prohibited.

LIBERATOR is published monthly by the Afro-American Research Institute, Inc. 244 East 46 Street, New York, N. Y., 10017

Subscription Prices: Within Continental United States:

Single Copy: 35¢, 1 year \$3.00
2 years \$5.50

Foreign surface Mail: 1 year \$6.00

Foreign air mail: 1 year \$13.00

All manuscripts, letters, subscription orders, changes of address should be sent to **LIBERATOR**, 244 East 46 Street, N.Y., N.Y., 10017
Tel: YUkon 6-5939, area code 212
Advertising Rates Sent Upon Request



Daniel H. Watts
editor-in-chief

EDITORS
Richard Gibson
Africa, Asia and Europe
Clayton Riley
Arts
Tom Feelings
Illustrator

Contents

EDITORIAL "Only Following Orders"	3
ANALYSIS A Humanistic Democracy by Magoroh Maruyama	4
AFRICA REPORT by Richard Gibson	11
POETRY Me and Santa by Robert T. Bowen	10
PHOTO ESSAY	9
SHORT STORY Loimos by Edgar White	12
THEATRE REVIEW Slave Ship by Clayton Riley	19
BOOK REVIEWS Which Way to Go Bloodline by James G. Spady by Toni Cade	20 20
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	22

An Important Notice for All LIBERATOR Readers

DUE TO RISING PRODUCTION COSTS, **LIBERATOR** IS FORCED TO ANNOUNCE ITS FIRST PRICE INCREASE IN THE LAST 10 YEARS. AS OF JANUARY 1, 1970, SUBSCRIPTION RATES WILL BE \$4.00 FOR ONE YEAR, \$7.50 FOR TWO YEARS; NEWSSTAND RATES WILL BE 40¢ PER COPY.

"Only Following Orders"

At the end of World War Two, twenty-five years ago, the United States joined the rest of the "Free World" in condemning all Germans for the massacre of the Jews. Again and again, armed with its own self-righteousness, this country publicly denounced genocide in all of its evil forms. Then, true to its Judeo-Christian beliefs, it refused to ratify the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

White Americans have always loved to preach about the need for morality, truthfulness, and love of neighbor. They preached while decimating American Indians; while cleaning and loading their rifles, cutting slits into nightriding white sheets in order to "maintain law and order" (translated: nigger hunting); while polluting the air with hate in Chicago, 1968. Now spurred by the latest revelations of white America's "civilized" behavior, this time in Vietnam, they have begun to preach again.

The exposure of the atrocities committed at Songmy, South Vietnam, comes as no surprise to us in the Afro-American community; we have seen too many white American Dachaus and Auschwitz's for that. What does surprise us is that at this late hour America is still displaying such an enormous capacity for self-deception and racial arrogance. Congressmen, spokesmen, observers all, are crawling out of the termite-infested woodwork of America to proclaim their outrageous shock and dismay at the massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese men, women and children by full-blooded American boys defending the American Way of Life. "How could this happen?" they all ask, then collectively shrug their shoulders and disclaim any personal responsibility for this latest crime against mankind. In their tortured minds, they reason that "America is near perfect except for a few minor human imperfections," completely ignoring the cold reality that a nation which could develop terms like "nigger," "spic," "chink," and "gook" to describe human beings is psychologically programmed to "carry out orders," to commit mass murder.

All the impartial investigating commissions and expressions of sympathy cannot wash away the rivers of blood that are flowing in the valleys and streets of Vietnam, for we are all guilty -- yes, guilty. Even we, the victims of American racism, are guilty. For so many of us have stood idly by and watched crimes of violence perpetrated against mankind without raising a finger to defend or echoing a sound of protest.

Will it be said of our generation that "we were too busy 'doing our own thing' to care about mankind?"

-- DANIEL H. WATTS

A Humanistic

The European-American democracy is based on four principles: (1) each voter is assumed to represent his own interests or his group's interest, but not the interests of other groups or opponent groups; (2) each candidate is assumed to represent his "constituency" only, but not other constituencies or opposing constituencies; (3) the vote be cast on pre-selected choices; (4) the choice which obtains the votes of the majority (defined as 50, 66, 75 percent, etc.) is imposed upon the non-majority.

Superimposed on these principles is the occasional use of scalar compromise in the preselection of the choices when they are quantitative in nature such as budget. Scalar compromise is often practiced in order to maximize the number of votes to be gained. Once the choices are printed out on the ballot, they become noncontinuous choices; the voter has in effect lost his options.

Each of the four principles has shortcomings, but the shortcomings of the fourth are easily pointed out because tangible arithmetic arguments can be made against it. The fourth principle can be criticized on two grounds: (1) the suppression of the "minorities" is philosophically wrong; (2) this principle allows for technical manipulations of voter zoning for a distorted outcome.

The first ground is self-explanatory. The second can be illustrated as



Democracy

by MAGOROH MARUYAMA



follows: Suppose there are 100 senators in a hypothetical federal government, that the national population is 200 million and that 40 million (20 percent) of them are Black. Suppose also that the nation is divided into 50 states, of which 30 have a population of 2 million each, and the other 20 states have a population of 7 million each. Suppose that each state elects two senators, and that the 40 million Blacks are spread evenly throughout the 30 small states, i.e., 1,333,333 Blacks in each of the 30 small states. In these states, Blacks are 66 percent majority. Thus, in elections to choose state senators, if each Black voter votes for a Black candidate, and each white voter votes for a white candidate, this result: 60 Black senators and 40 white senators.

This, of course, is a highly hypothetical possibility. But in actuality, the reverse is true in many of the cities in the U.S.A. The voter zoning in a city is frequently arranged in such a way that the Black voters, even though a majority in certain parts of the city, are divided into several zones which contain a high percentage of whites. This reduces the number of zones in which the Blacks are the majority, and therefore considerably limits their ability to vote effectively as a bloc.

Manipulation by voter zoning can be eliminated if there is no zoning at all and votes can cross the state lines, and if all senators are elected

cont next pg.

Magoroh Maruyama is an Associate Professor of Sociology at California State College at Hayward.

simultaneously. Currently, however, only one-third of the federal Senate is elected in any one election. Take a more extreme example to illustrate this point: Suppose each month there is an election of one senator to the senate, taking 100 months to complete the cycle. At each election, there is only one "vacancy." Even if the votes can cross the state lines, this vacancy is filled by *one* man who gets the votes of the majority, because we cannot split one man into percentages. The result is that no minority candidate gets elected in any election. Therefore none of the 100 senators will represent the non-majority. But if the 100 senators are elected simultaneously and the votes can cross the state lines, it is probable that the result will represent the various groups somewhat proportionally.

So much for the fourth principle. Now to our main topic, the first three principles. Their shortcomings do not become apparent until we detach ourselves from our culture and examine these principles on epistemological grounds.

The Greek-European-American epistemology is basically hierarchical and categorical. Its hierarchical nature manifests itself in such forms as the deductive Aristotelian logic, hierarchical cosmology, science focusing on unidirectional causality, religion based on a prime mover, etc. Its categorical nature manifests itself in such forms as job classification, and departmentalization of science. Various categories have very little to do with one another except through subordination to a common supercategory.

American democracy is hierarchical and categorical in spite of some patchwork called "checks and balances." As far as the voting mechanism is concerned, each person at the voting booth has nothing to do with any other person. It was designed so in order to insure his "independ-

ent" choice. Political campaign, which involves interaction between persons, has meaning only in terms of the candidate who becomes, once elected, a hierarchical node and therefore a supercategory.

Let us contrast this model of democracy with another model, one found among Navaho Indians and Eskimos and formulated in a mutualistic and relational epistemology.

The Navaho universe is a harmony among humans, animals, natural forces, spirits and ghosts. No one is superior to another. Each influences each other. Their purpose in life is to maintain harmony in the universe. The Navahos are individualistic and exercise more individual freedom than the average American. Yet their individualism is channeled to maintenance of harmony and restor-



ation of disturbed harmony, never to competition as is the case in the American culture.

The Navahos have a large population far exceeding 100,000. Yet traditionally there are no chiefs among them. When a community decision must be made, all concerned get together. Each participant expresses his point of view. Each thinks in terms of harmony in the universe, not in terms of his competition against others. This should not be misconstrued as an altruism in the sense of self-sacrifice. A Navaho derives his gratification from the harmony in the community.

If there are different points of view, solution is sought in various dimensions until a dimension is found which satisfies *everyone* concerned. Unanimity, not majority rule over non-majority, is attained.

Persons living in a hierarchical and categorical society may perceive such an attained unanimity as an artificial self-constraint. This is, however, an incorrect projection, because an attained Navaho unanimity is mistakenly perceived as a *compromise* between competing interests who must have sacrificed some losses as a tool for a greater gain elsewhere. But in a mutualistic and relational universe, unanimity is a natural outcome of *dimensional* exploration among those who seek gratification in channeling their individuality into the harmony of the community.

The shortcomings of the three first principles of the European-American democracy model cannot be removed within its hierarchical and categorical epistemology. We have to introduce a democracy model based on mutualistic and relational epistemology.

Inevitably questions arise: Can a model, such as the Navahos', function in a society larger and more complex than the Navaho tribe? How do we solve the problem of communication in a larger and more com-

plex society, even if a democracy model such as theirs is desirable? Fortunately, size and complexity are quantitative problems which can be solved with computer technology.

Let me spell out the principles and the procedures of a model I propose:

PRINCIPLES

1. The culture is to be oriented toward mutualistic harmony in the universe, not toward individual achievement, competition, hierarchy and power.
2. Policy choice is made not in terms of votes on preselected alternatives, but in the process of explorations into new dimensions in order to arrive at a solution which every individual can interpret, in his own way, as contributing to the harmony in the universe and as allowing him to channel his individuality toward the harmony.
3. A candidate for a public office does not represent or claim to represent a constituency group. He proposes a way to contribute to harmony in the universe through his office. Choice among candidates is made not by majority vote on specified candidates, but in the process of proposing new candidates one after another until a person is found whom every individual can interpret as capable of contributing to harmony in the universe through the office. If there are several candidates whom the entire community judges as so qualified, then the final choice is made by mutual consent among the candidates, but not by voting.

PROCEDURES

1. The hierarchical and categorical culture needs to be changed to a mutualistic and relational culture. This depends on the desire and the will of the members of the community to change their culture,

cont next pg.

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, PLEASE COME HOME

**An Open Letter to
a beautiful black
brother from an
equally beautiful
white sister**

Send one dollar cash or money-order to M. Howard, 442 Central Building, Dept. LI., 810 Third Avenue, Seattle, Wash. 98104

Black Revolutionaries

An important article by Dan Aldridge on the development of black revolutionary consciousness. Also, David Horowitz analyzes the role of giant corporations in the formation of U.S. foreign policy; and the editors write on the significance of the multinational corporation. Send for your free sample copy of the November issue now.

MONTHLY REVIEW

Edited by Paul M. Sweezy
and Harry Magdoff

Dept. 7 116 West 14 St. N.Y., N.Y. 10011
\$7 a year students \$5 (foreign add \$1)

and on the availability of educators, writers, editors, publishers, radio and TV executives who can fulfil the need of the people for culture change. Computers can be used for: (a) efficient matching between the need for various types of education and the supply of human resources; and (b) mechanical extension of human resources.

2. Since each person will think in terms of the harmony in the universe, he needs to be kept informed of the facts outside his own environment. This requires a wider range of learning than is the case in a model in which it suffices for each person to think only in terms of his own faction or environment. Each person can periodically use a computer to check to see where he lacks information.

3. Explorations into new dimensions can be greatly facilitated by computers. New ideas can be generated both by humans and by computers. In both cases, the detailed feasibility of new ideas can be computed by computers. Once a new idea is found to be workable, it is made known to the public as a proposal, and each person can feed back his opinion through computers. Persons who are not interested in the issue under question do not have to participate in the opinion collection. Opinions against the proposal are compiled by computers and published, and new ideas are searched. The process repeats until all *participating* persons (or, for practical purposes, say 98 percent of the participants) favor the proposal. (If the proposal is adopted on the basis of 98 percent, the opinions of the other 2 percent must be published and recorded.)

4. Search for a candidate for a public office may be made by humans or by computers. If a candidate is found, his philosophy and plans are made public, and each person interested can feed back his opinion through computers. The search is continued until one is found whom all *participating*

persons (for practical purposes, say 98 percent) support. (If the candidate is inaugurated on the basis of 98 percent, the opinions of the other 2 percent must be published and recorded.)

5. The more heterogeneous the population, the more difficult it is to arrive at unanimity. One way to facilitate unanimity is to *decentralize* the community decisions as much as possible. Decentralization may be accomplished *geographically, ethnically* or otherwise. If, in a community, unanimity cannot be achieved between two or more groups, but can be achieved within each group, then *tribalization* is put into effect. Tribalization is defined here as peaceful coexistence of legally independent groups, each enforcing its regulations in itself but respecting and honoring the regulations of other groups in intergroup situations.

6. Search for unanimity requires a large amount of time, and delays adoption of new regulations (measure or laws). This is particularly true if old regulations are permitted to remain in effect when new regulations fail to be adopted. The result is a conservatism mechanically created. One way to counteract this tendency is to require regulations to expire after some length of time. The length of time for a regulation to remain in effect can be specified when the regulation is adopted. There can be a general maximum length for all regulations, say 50 years for the federal regulations, 30 years for the state regulations, and 20 years for city and local regulations. Regulations may be revised or replaced before the expiration date. Any contract signed for a length of time beyond the termination of a regulation under which it was signed survives the regulation and remains in force for the length specified in the contract. Renewal of a regulation beyond the specified time length is possible only if a unanimous decision for renewal is reached during the

last five percent of the time length (one year for a 20-year regulation, etc.). If neither the renewal of the old regulation nor adoption of a new regulation receives a unanimous support, the new regulation proposed becomes effective as a temporary regulation, to be replaced, within one tenth of the duration of the old regulation after the expiration of the old regulation, by a fully adopted regulation or another temporary regulation. If there are several new regulations and none of them receives unanimous support, a temporary tribalization is put into effect.

CONCLUSION

Many ongoing culture changes indicate a trend toward dehierarchization. There is need for a new model for our future society. The model discussed above may or may not work. In any case, it needs further elaboration and modifications. Conceptualization of models based on mutualistic and relational epistemology is our first step toward converting our present *quantitative* democracy, which is based on majority rule and homogenization, into a *qualitative* democracy, which accommodates "minority cultures" and allows for harmonious diversification. We need to create workable, viable and growable models.

REFERENCES

1. Freuchen, P. *Book of the Eskimos*. Bramhall House, 1961.
2. Kluckhohn, C. "The philosophy of the Navaho Indians," *Ideological Differences and World Order*, edited by F.S.C. Northrop, Yale University Press, 1949.
3. Maruyama, M. "Metaorganization of information: information in classificational universe, relational universe and relevantial universe." *Cybernetica*, pp. 224-236, 1965.
4. Maruyama, M. "The Navaho philosophy: an esthetic ethic of mutuality." *Mental Hygiene*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 242-249, 1967.
5. Merrifield, C.W. "Beyond Power," *Associations Internationales*, vol. 12, pp. 723-726, 1966.



MOTHER AFRICA---U. A. R.

ME AND SANTA

Santa Claus
I hate you because
You stink.
You and your one night stand
You and your grubby hand

Your toys, and joys, and silly poise
You funky bastard
You take more than you could ever give
'Cause you've got nothing to give and
still you want to live
In the hearts of those whose parts
You soon will scatter in the streets

Santa Claus
I hope you get stuck
in a slum chimney
I hope your bobm-totin' sleigh
Backfires and smoke-stains
your jolly bottom
You've got an unrighteous nerve
to laugh or even smile,
You skunk. You ought to
Walk
from house to house and
get down on your fat knees
and beg.

"Please forgive me for I
know not what I do."

You aren't holy
You aren't special
You are a jinx, a hoax
To fool the folks.

Go someplace -- far away
Skat, cat
You rotten-ize an already
Sick humanity
Go get yourself last hired and
quickly fired in a hell
reddened by your own tattered suit.

You foggy freak of a madman --
Sit on your *own* western lap
and pee on yourself,
Go hungry a few times and
then choke yourself with Christmas
candy: bright and sticky.
Go cold one night and
then
Cover yourself with eight reindcer.

You know what you stand for:
You stand for yourself
You're a holiday pimp
Stuffed with zeroes and dollars
And fearful hollers
you can't and don't
bring comfort. You bring
constipation
You are envy
You are jealousy
You are pettiness and noise
and emptiness

By January you've forgotten your
Own name
Where are you *then*, Oh Bloated One?
Counting receipts?
Patrolling the streets?
or
Smiling from your cheats
to be
Improved upon next year?

You bring grief, you Bearded Grab Bag
And you don't give a shit about children.
And I'm gonna help them learn about
You
and your sleigh -- full of bad habits
I'm through with you and you know it.
I hate you and now you know that, too.

May your snow melt
and
In the chilly waters that follow
May you DROWN!!

-- Robert T. Bowen

African Guerrilla Leaders Denounce Each Other

Dar Es Salaam: The Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) has suffered the worst split yet in the troubled history of Africa's liberation movements.

Recently, the three-man leadership of Frelimo shocked African and world opinion with an astounding series of charges and countercharges, revealing a top-to-bottom split in their organization. In a statement issued from Frelimo's exile headquarters in the Tanzanian capital, Uria Simango -- once Vice President of Frelimo and briefly Provisional President after the assassination on February 3, 1969 of Frelimo's first President, Eduardo Mondlane -- claimed that he too had been marked for murder and by his own colleagues in the triumvirate, Marcelino Dos Santos and Samora Machel. Simango said that Frelimo was in dire straits, torn by "nepotism, regionalism and tribalism." He revealed that increasing numbers of disillusioned Frelimo guerrillas have been defecting to the Portuguese who rule over the Southern African country, rather than continue the arduous struggle for the independence of their country.

In the past, similar charges have been made by the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (Coremo), Frelimo's rival liberation movement which is Zambia-based and operates mainly in central and southern Mozambique. Frelimo is active in the north along the Tanzanian border.

In reply to Simango, who was given personal protection by his own followers and the Tanzanian police as well, Dos Santos and Samora Machel declared that they had "relieved" Simango of his post in the leadership until the Central Committee could examine his case at its next meeting. As it takes many months for the Central Committee to

convene (some of its members have to travel in difficult conditions overland from Mozambique), the announcement was considered a bid by Simango's two opponents to oust him and his supporters as swiftly as possible.

Observers believe the split is certain to strengthen the demands of Coremo for greater recognition and support from the Organization of African Unity, and that it may bring out into the open the similar deep internal divisions within those groups in Southern Africa allied with Frelimo, in particular the strife-ridden African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and its junior partner, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) of Rhodesia. At the beginning of 1969, these organizations, plus a few others, met at Khartoum under the sponsorship of the World Peace Council and the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, in an abortive attempt to force the OAU Liberation Committee to grant them exclusive recognition and support. The OAU leaders refused to accept the inflated claims of the Khartoum groups and warned them instead of the urgent necessity to seek genuine unity of all forces in the fight for Africa's freedom. The appeal for unity went unheeded and Africa now faces the prospect of more splits than ever in the ranks of its freedom fighters.

Kaunda Amnesties Political Prisoners
Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda has made a daring bid to restore his country's national unity by declaring a general amnesty for all political prisoners. The President pleaded for national unity to solve Zambia's problems of economic and political development and to defend the Central African country against its hostile neighbors in white-minority ruled South Africa, Rhodesia

and the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola.

President Kaunda said he had declared a general amnesty "so that we can start afresh and reshape the country's destiny together." He called on Harry Nkumbula, leader of the rival African National Congress of Zambia, and Nkumbula's aide Nalumino Munda to join with him in the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) and to work together as brothers in developing the country.

Shortly afterwards, President Kaunda released Nalumino Munda from detention and announced that there would be no more political prisoners in Zambia.

Pin-ups and Chairman Mao Banned in Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya: Part of a general political crackdown in Kenya which recently led to the banning of the country's sole opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU), President Jomo Kenyatta's government has also reaffirmed its ban on girls' magazines and the *Quotations from Chairman Mao*.

Any publication of China's Foreign Languages Press is now forbidden to Kenya readers, as well as the American pin-up magazines "Adam" and "Cavalier," and the British "Men Only." "Playboy" so far has not been placed on the list, but U.S. Ambassador William Attwood's *The Reds and the Blacks*, a frank account of his service in Guinea and Kenya, has been banned, along with the "Nationalist," the daily newspaper of President Julius Nyerere's TANU political party in neighboring Tanzania.

The Kenya Ministry of Information announcement concerning the banned publications gave no explanation why any of them had been forbidden to readers in that East African country.

"All the houses are mute...."



LO

Part 1

Tonight, as yesterday, I am alone. Sitting here, sitting, sitting, under partly colored skies, under plastered ceilings.

Something important has happened, though I forget exactly what.

A new noise is upon this place. Or a new silence. Today I did not go out. I went out yesterday, though. Stepped over certain prostrate bodies, passed others.

There is a cat which has chosen my room for lounging. He or it does not mind my presence here. Dogs howl in yards, ashcans clatter. The same tedious symbols. The same dogs, the same ashcans. I do not travel at night. They say it is not safe, though there are nocturnal guards almost everywhere. Their voices can be heard sometimes amidst the other noises, moving beneath windows, commenting on the bodies.

At first everyone was frightened, but then those who had something to lose were only half-frightened; the ritual of order kept them going. The media gave out information saying only that it was but a temporary affliction of the city caused by a series of freak accidents in several vital sewers. The result was a pestilential increase, and though but few actually saw signs of rats, rumor was fast about.

I for my part was quite amazed to hear those I knew speak of it. The wise spoke wisely, the foolish foolishly -- such is the boring way of life -- but now even the foolish saw things I thought them quite incapable of. Many knew before they died (which you will have to admit was quite something)

In the beginning I heard the more learned of them say, "This pestilence will be a good thing because the rich will be hurt by this; it will bring them to reality." I heard them speaking in small cafes or outside of school buildings holding paperback books in gloved hands. But later, when the rich efficiently left the city, being followed quickly by the bourgeoisie and the friends of the bourgeoisie (comprised mainly of the aforementioned learned people), I heard nothing. Now among the dying there are only the poor, the artists, the scavengers and the various police and guardsmen who have volunteered

IMOS

by EDGAR WHITE

(for a laudable sum) to oversee us in our peculiar stages of frenzy.

Strangely enough, though, this affliction upon the city has caused little change in the various exigencies. For did I not upon the early part of the morning, experience with more than a little dread the metacarpal knocking of my landlady upon my door? And arising, did I not then extend my small Black hand in an obdurate if not admirable gesture toward the lock of the door? She, staring into my sunken and myopic brown eyes, asked with hostility for the rent. Then myself speaking as one afraid, saying, "Mrs. Mortmain, I regret not having the rent, but my grandmother died three days ago. She raised me, you see."

For, in truth, I had gone out upon the streets some three days before, walking awkwardly through streets which had never seemed so narrow toward the hospital to acquire the false teeth, the small mirror, the slippers and the one or two pieces of effluvia which were to be membered among her remains. Her body, having had enough of itself, had still had the discourtesy to die on her, and I, being prey to various amenities, then buried her.

My landlady, who was clad in some grey garments to hide her now withered and childlike sex, looked from behind her eyes, unspeaking. She told me to state the particulars of my grandmother's death. This I did successfully, I think. I ushered her in from the doorway saying, "You see, Mrs. Mortmain, several days ago my grandmother, having reached the latter part of seventy, suffered an inroad in her health, culminating a few days after, when her heart reached the maximal point of disease and perished. They believe it to be an affliction of the heart, though it may have been the plague, yet indeed possibly her heart. I have subsequently been beset by matters of burial, etc."

Whereupon Mrs. Mortmain stopped me (which was good, as I had little more to say) and let out a series of jeremiads regarding the difficulties of maintaining Topoth House, our domicile. I wanted to say something clever, but didn't (or couldn't). She paused a moment, involved herself in various fiscal machinations,

and then said in a voice not altogether foreign, "I'll give you one more week. Next Monday, the money or you're out!"

She exited by the door leaving death behind in the hallway. Mrs. Mortmain is a woman of unusual cruelty. Her response displeased me.

It is winter now, so if my grandmother died several days ago, she died in winter. It's better to die in winter than summer, I think, though perhaps not. I left the funeral home along with the body and the pollinator. I entered the funeral car, which seemed sufficiently akin to verisimilitude to be entered. En route to the graveyard, we passed many young people, and older people, some on their way home, some leaving from home. I saw also several women who moved me to think of the act of copulation. This, however, I dismissed, as I feared some might judge my action of horizontal fornication in a public streetway, or atop a hearse amid day-laborers and burghers, to be asocial. Later, however, as I walked upon the too soft earth of the graveyard ground, I had great difficulty keeping myself from thinking of the many times Jill and I had made love in dark afternoons. Making love on couches and beds and creaking floors, and her small strong thighs swelling, quivering, and myself breathing into her quite open vulva between her woman's body. I like the smell of the room after we've made love. The fish smell, craven warm smell of aftersex. Then out of the window night would come.

There being no priest, the pollinator spoke the comfortable words; the trees stood up for death. Shadows which were our shadows walking away. Some had thrown what I believe to be flowers upon the grave. Having gathered for death we departed, fingers of branches downturned. The wind backward moving.

"They say when people are buried their bones turn to snakes."

"To snakes?"

"Yes, to snakes."

"Large snakes?"

"Yes, large snakes that slither along the earth."

cont next pg.

Part 2

Perhaps at this point it would not be amiss to speak on the matter of my youth: my youth was an unfortunate one.

Part 3

There is this beast, which for lack of a better name I shall have to call Myself. Myself wakes in mornings, placing two anthropoidal feet upon cold ground. Myself grunts and farts and then, having no choice, acknowledges another day. Myself sees to its toilet. Myself brushes its teeth with the bristles of a pig. Myself coughs, Myself eats.

Experiencing life's feeble clonicity with a scrubbed body is a civil thing. Being clean avails us much insofar as it allows us a certain illusion of control.

Sitting at my breakfast table I note that a bit of burnt toast tastes better if dipped in lukewarm coffee. Shall I use one or two teaspoons of sugar? Would it not be better to husband my limited supply for perhaps tomorrow? To hell with tomorrow, I do not know if I shall live until tomorrow. Yes, I do.

Sitting here, elbow at knee, head in hand, gnomie in my parietal enclosure, awaiting the darkening of the sky which I've grown to learn means the coming of night. Often others come here; my house is apparently some sort of nexus point, a kind of halfway house for the disturbed. Those who come are called friends or sometimes lovers. The friends eat my food. The lovers make love or allow me to make love. All speak about nothing usually. Sometimes the change in weather is mentioned or the lack of change. At times the news of a new death reaches my ears. I utter niceties, "Oh, how unfortunate, and he was very young wasn't he?" But mostly I listen. Dayfall, nightfall. Genesis and phthisis, genesis and phthisis. Often it seems to me that this place is slanted. Everything seems warped or at an angle. Perhaps that is why the diverse and repetitive faces of people seem so strangely tortured.

When one journies out along the streetways of this lower east side, one comes upon these tortured faces, occasionally passes bodies. These quasi-bodies are clad in all manner of vestments (usually poorly so). The movement of these bodies are Fabian. They seem to be dying in their clothes. The backs bent, the eyes agley, the cheeks either sunken or swollen from some manner of disease. I think it to be the plague but it matters little what I think.

These Empedoclean bodies born in an unnatural age are most often androgynous and indeterminate. As to whether this has to do with some malady of the bowels, vapours, privy parts, or what we jokingly call the mind, I do not know. In any case, I've thought overmuch on these things and am none the wiser for it. I merely grow older and more disheartened.

The situation which I describe, this tedious situation which I call life, belongs merely to that category of mutability. For I am well given to understand that even

as I scribble out these lines those who are my friends and lovers are quietly dying. While I moronically sit upon my round African arse attempting to portrait the faces of my coevals, they are rapidly disappearing. Even I will eventually disappear, die. It is for this reason that one must keep clear distinction in one's brain between past, present, and future. For in truth one cannot say I made love to Ellen tomorrow, or Ellen is alive in ten months. Time is divided into separate compartments so as to easily distinguish between the living and the dead. He was alive but is not. What could one do without the modalities of language?

This world seems to me a huge swamp, the enormity of which is occasionally dotted by thin and wretched forms which are human beings. All of us running at an equipace. There are certain rocks upon which we occasionally beat our respective heads. And a few trees from which we occasionally hang ourselves more or less successfully.

One friend of mine is named Thomas. I yclepted him Peter (as I did not like Thomas). Thomas-Peter is an odd sort of fellow, of late given to drink. There is an omnipresent grimace on his circular face (I do not know as to what peculiar stage of dementia he is suffering) Peter-Thomas speaks of revolution, meaning apparently The Revolution. I like to listen to him as he eats my food, steals the few pennies from my house. He says, "Blackamoor!"

"Yes," I answer.

"Blackamoor, it's only a matter of time now before it comes."

"It's always only a matter of time."

"No, no, but really it's got to come, we're making plans"

"Are these the same plans you were making last year?"

"No, these are new plans, the plague will help us this time."

"Oh," I answer.

More recently, however, I have reached an odd state of mind; upon hearing the word revolution, I fall into a great fit of laughter and have been known to fling myself upon the ground and kick my feet in the air. This causes some to speculate as to my own sanity, though usually the response is, "Oh, it's probably just the plague. They'll get him soon."

Indeed the thought of being placed in a small decreet institution with orange walls and artificial flowers does not fill me with dread.

Day passes into night, night gets bored and passes into day. The fingers grow nails. The toes grow nails. The flesh grows flaccid. The soul dies. Sometimes we are walking in winter, stepping aside on certain muddy footpaths to let another pass. Sometimes it is summer and the ground is hot beneath us. Occasionally things which are thoughts pass from vallety to actuality. More often nothing passes but our bodies. Lying abed with outstretched hand toward the vacant air, or closed fist resting upon stomach. Perhaps to quiet

the beating heart, perhaps merely to find a resting place for the hand. We traffic in the pedestrian pleasures, we let the fingers wander about in the private places of women, one does these things or others. All is equal under God and above the earth.

My neighbor realizes the passage of time by punctually going to the toilet to void himself at precisely 5 a.m. every morning. This act of creation allows him to vouchsafe his existence, as being in accordance with the Greek ONTES, or being. He merely looks afterward at what he has done and concludes: "I did that, therefore I must exist." An admirable quality, that.

It was a fortnight ago that the thought of escape entered my head. This was not unnatural, as the city was now afflicted with a pestilence. Would it not, I pondered, be prudent for me to now haul-arse and get the living hell out of this place? And then I remembered: one can't escape. I did not escape.

Part 4

Genesis and phthisis, genesis and phthisis. More or less life goes on. Less.

I am now obliged to speak of myself, a subject which causes me great dejection. My name is Blackamoor (those who are fortunately unacquainted with me call me merely Black or nigger, as the mood suits them). I have successfully reached what the Britons call my majority, my twenty-first year. I am unkind by disposition and Black by parentage and I have through a peculiar set of curious circumstances found myself in the lazar house of the world. I was displeased at my birth (firstly at the process by which I was born, namely fornication, and secondly, at the singular lack of choice which I had regarding my race and class in society). Moreover, I did not want to leave the womb of my mother; as she was a very large woman much given to sitting, I found the environment a comfortable one. My friend Thomas (whom I call Peter) once said of me that my problem was that I was born Black. I responded that my problem was in fact that I was born at all.

Strange, but the fact that many others here also suffer leaves me not a whit more comforted. One goes forth on crutches and finds another who has to drag himself along the ground and for some reason one rejoices at being less afflicted. One acts as if one had a choice as to one's affliction. As though one chose one form of debility over another. False games all. It matters little. No, that's a lie; it matters not at all. Here in the leper colony one finds all varieties of debilitation, but it is all one malady. All a simple human malady.

Perhaps my acedia was caused by a blow to the skull which I received at birth or shortly after birth. If that is so, then the sight of the bleak writhing tenement buildings and their inhabitants really has nothing to do with my sorrow. Yes, it would be better that way,

I think. It must have been a blow to the head or perhaps the overuse of the sexual organs at a young age. Or maybe it was the violent change of temperature between that of my mother's womb and the world.

The thing I feel now is a kind of sleep. Perhaps just a drowsiness. No, a kind of sleep. And in this sleep wherein I live and await waking for death, there are diverse people. Really all one person I sometimes suspect. These people, these diverse people, are all running through a sort of vacant lot. Occasionally they look over their shoulder in dread. Perhaps to regard a someone they are certain is following. A someone they are certain will catch them at a certain time and place already quite determined. Often they fall, bruising what appears to be legs and arms. They rise guiltily (the ignominy of fifth), and continue less certain toward iniquity. Daylight, nightlight. Sounds are made, sometimes heard.

But those who leave my halfway house -- those who visit me, I mean, and then leave -- what happens to them? Some return. Some do not return. Is it death that they do? Do they do it alone? I should take some kind of poll or census. Do you plan on dying alone? Do you like dying while in the sexual act? How successful is tumescence while perishing? Did your parents like dying alone? One of the above, all of the above, or none of the above?

But what was it that I forgot? Something important. But nothing of any great consequence has ever happened that I remember. Perhaps I have missed something since I came here, although I've asked others much older than myself and they can't seem to remember anything of any consequence happening in their lifetime either. Could it be that nothing of any consequence has ever happened here on this dunghill? No, that would be impossible. People wouldn't stand for this effrontery forever. Man surely would not keep up this tedious game ad infinitum, ad nauseam. I have not looked in the right places. I somehow always feel as if I were living amidst an alien people. These projectiles with arms and legs who suffer so loudly.

These offensive bipeds who sometimes grow patuerient, sometimes grow old. These who are so overly quick to speak, and are so wholly without grace. It seems as though I have been in this life a long time, in fact, forever. I do not remember getting into it, and am reasonably given to understand I shall not remember getting out of it.

Looking at myself as I sleep, I seem to resemble a mountain of misery. The two shoulder blades are as two hillocks. The hands are joined together above my head in a contrite manner. The belly is beneath me as though afloat in a tub. I seem foolish.

Jill doesn't sleep like this. She always sleeps on her right side with feet joined closely together, her body arched as a child. And how shall I sleep as an old man? More foolishly for certain. When I am an old man with swan neck and bad bowels, reading Euripedes? But I shall probably not sleep much then. Only when

cont next pg.

the pain is excessive.

I do not dream much these days. Usually it is the same dream. I find myself walking deep in snow. I think it obvious that some great snowstorm has happened and I must walk this place without complaint. Softly the snow touches me. All the ground is a bed to fall upon. Several weeks ago I dreamt I had come upon a strange town. Snow fell as usual. None could answer me in my language, which I believe to have been English. The various people I came upon, some beautiful, some not, made noises toward me and accompanied their speech with serious contortions of the face. Then one by one the inhabitants of this city (for I believe it to have been a city) entered various houses, leaving only their footprints outside the houses in the snow.

Part 5

I can remember a time before the funeral -- I must have been six then. The image is of a greying day: my grandmother moving strongly through dangerous streets, I close behind her, being centripetally drawn along by her outstretched arm. She braved the dreadful encounters with foreign persons and metallic beasts with eyes, cars. I looked on in wonder. She was strong then and of the quick.

I remember also, at that time, that I believed any object (be it person or thing) which loomed toward me was doing so in order to kiss me. I've of late learned to the contrary.

For these past several days, I've been quite alone. Not even the plunderers of my food have come. My room has colors now, somewhat like the infra-luminescence which traffic lights commit on wet pavement at night. Now there is just the sound of the Arabbiati outside the window. This, along with the sound of garbage cans. Is that noise in the street perhaps God? No, I think it is only a noise in the street.

I wonder what happened to Jill. Perhaps it's presumptuous to assume anything has happened to her. It has been some great length of time since I last saw her. I remember, she stood in the doorway awhile. I leaned against a chair and waved a limpid finger, attempting perhaps to look the part of a prosaic clown. What is it about her that I love? Is it her solitary dark eyes? Or the naughty small breasts asleep beneath her clothes? I don't know how she feels about the plague; we never spoke of it. Once I was going to but thought better of it.

Jill grew up in large rooms with antiques looking on at her dressing and undressing. She progressed through comfortable environs of school, church and society. She found my ghetto background quaint. She had a certain habit of waiting until I was thoroughly spent, my thing shrunken, my mind collapsing into quiet crystals; then she would run deliquescent hands along my body and ask, "Blackamoor, did you ever kill anyone?"

"Not that I remember."

"Did you ever rape anyone?"

"Girls, you mean?"

"Yes, of course, girls!"

"Probably not."

"Oh, I had hoped that you had."

"Why?"

"So you could tell me, of course, then I would know what it felt like."

"Oh."

Had life not been cruel, Jill would probably have continued to quietly slip into silken panties. Had not her father fallen to excess, and then to suicide, leaving a hypochondriachal mother for her to look after. She managed to hold a job for an admirable length of time before deciding it had ceased to be amusing. She then fell into art and drew Greek vases tolerably well and developed a certain penchant for "nude reclining" paintings. On one dark occasion I asked her what color the street payments were. She answered, "Dirty."

"What kind of dirty?"

"Very dirty."

We never spoke of art again.

It is surprising to what degree men resemble animals. The ape, the hound, and the peculiar birds of prey Society awards honorific titles of beautiful and handsome to those few of us who are least reminiscent of our origin. The simian protrusion of the lower lip, the unseemly bulge of the belly, the bent spine, etc.

Why must one assume such vulgar postures before the void? I have these objects which extend from my body, I call them hands, they are adjoined to what I thrill in calling arms. More properly, the arms climax at the hands. They are not very large really, not large for a human being.

It seems to me that all this life (and why should we not call it that?) is but a remembrance, a sort of re-remembrance really, in which we re-experience all that we have either done or dreamt of already doing. Hence, I am continually being brought to situations which are perfectly familiar to me, though I have supposedly never come upon them before. *Pari passu*, there seems to be a gradual disavowment of the past, images take on limpidity. Was there, in fact, a day quite different from this day, when I perhaps walked out upon a ground which quickened beneath me? The sun equal behind me as before. Was the city perhaps Paris or London? Was I happy then, taking gentle steps on twin feet?

This feeling I have of aloneness is a familiar one. I must have experienced this before in some similar place in some similar manner. Somewhere in this vast expanse of days and devices. The corpulent senility of isolation. The others which I have encountered, I have encountered in much the same manner. I have stepped aside for them along a muddy footpath. I have inclined myself toward them before withdrawing. I have stood in wonder looking after them. Those who have said something causing me to say something. Those whom I have watched fall and those who watched me. All is quite familiar.

Part 6

Am sitting, am sitting, am sitting. Alone and opposite. One stupid leg crossed stupidly over another. Eyes dead, mouth mute, waiting to be lied to again. It's a queer time I'm given to understand. A most queer time. The old lies in a new way. Sometimes I walk out wearing something like a frock coat. They say I look like a great frock coat upon a wire hanger. The little tubular things which are my trousers wag in the wind. I make a noise wherever I go. Not much of a noise, surely, but a little noise.

The tabloids brings us lies. The food which is hurriedly made, dearly sold, hurriedly eaten gives us lies. It amazes me to find that my existence is vouchsafed by a multitude. There are those people (a host of whom are bill collectors, friends, gnomes, usurers, all) who apparently are not overly disturbed by the plague in the city. For daily I receive missives from everywhere. All of these people seem anxious less I should die without properly informing them first as to my departure and future location. One can do little good to one's creditors as a turd in hell. I have of late, however, been looking into insanity as a proper excuse for delinquency in payment.

One awaits these rare moments of lucidity. These occasions betwixt dis-ease, when one might enjoy one's morning pipe of tobacco perhaps without coughing almost to death. Those rare ephemeral periods when one is without headache, stomachache, backache, toothache, or other malady. When one is perhaps not impaled upon a pillow hoping for morning. The human body, the human engine so finely crafted is actually a pain machine. One sits quietly awaiting the next affliction, sometimes attempting an educated guess. Shall I put my house to order? Shall I gather up the diverse asymmetry of my cosmos and perhaps attempt some entelechy? Everywhere I see ruin, everywhere havoc. Things without substance, without form. There is a chaos even to putrefaction. There is a weariness and no desire for sleep, a hunger with no desire for food. Adopt a state of laxity and await the end.

I cannot but marvel at those faint tremors of inanity within me, that persistent ludicrous luminosity which I shall have to call hope for lack of a better word. That absurd recurring sensation that somehow everything will work out toward some end. The intellect knows far too much for that sort of folly; it must come from somewhere else -- the bowels, perhaps. The world moves. That is a lie, the world stands perfectly still; only people move and even they just a little. There are occasionally periods of unusual disquiet, unusual eruption. History is the documentation of the unusual eruptions. Civilization is what occurs between these catastrophes. These occasions of inordinate murder. Out of the rest periods of the world are born the one or two little quasi-worthy objects which one needs for solace.

Ten thousand years to get from the cave to the tenement house. We shall have to call this progress. If one moves in the dark and bumps one's head against

a wall and then walks in all the diverse directions and still continues to collide with a wall, one discovers at the end that one has learned nothing save that every way leads toward a wall, yet one finds succor in hope. Hope is the thing one has when one has nothing. Hope is a tetragram.

I shall set my house to order. I shall place everything as it was. Clean the few dishes. Throw out the plethora of rubbish. Sweep and clean the halls. Make everything as it was before I existed. This being done I shall then vanish. Will I remember ever being here at all? Will there be a part of me which shall ask after my previous state? Will I not then say something like, "Surely there was something which cloistered me"?

Doubtless there would be those who would look at me askance were I to speak of the blind days when the faces of my friends grew foreign to me. How this place and this time changed them so utterly. Those who would once turn to smile or gesture, show themselves in a loving way. Now all have become quite as animals. Eyes grown foreign, faces grown foreign. Pictures are a way of remembrance, a kind of feeble way of continuing a presence which is possibly warm, possibly loving. One is left in a room filled with pictures and silence. Silence and a penalty of so much time in which to reflect. Who are they who are the keepers of the wall? They who walk in divided places hoping no hope at all. It benefits a man little to live among strangers, even though he sees them suffering in a common way.

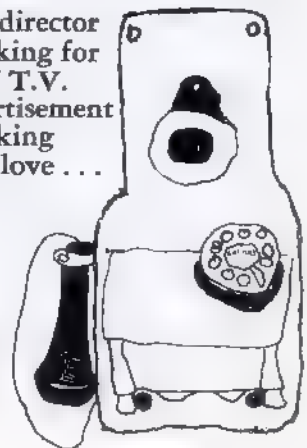
Lord, the body is such a poor place to house the soul.

Part 7

But let me say it another way. I look out my window, I see faces, darkly contorted, ashen. Even light falls in octagonal shadows. Men, half-men, sidle graveward in the streets. Men, young or old-young, foolishly seeming to be dying in their clothes. The lower east side quivers, utters up a smell like the dung of diseased animals. The wretched of the Bowery stumble toward the Red Cross center to sell their polluted

cont next pg.

**Young black art director
six years experience looking for
free lance in the areas of T.V.
commercials, print advertisement
and educational film making
call 643 1243 peace and love ...**



blood for wine. The artists move with dead eyes. The women's body (all one body), tired, utterly gasping toward halfway houses. Bringing tired odors from one place to another. All the houses are boarded and mute, toy houses, small cardboard cutouts. The police walk about quietly waiting for the inmates to go mad. Unnatural colors, unnatural taste, unnatural sleep.

The feet walking, talking paralytic twin steps. Going directionless. Projectiles afoot atop the sinking earth. Crossways. Nexus. Polar and parabolic. The feet constantly moving, the coats wagging. The bright brass buttons half-hanging with a fealty to the wearer. Conspiratorial voices from rooftops. Eyes that dare not look up toward anything.

Gentlemen, coxcombical daywalkers in finery and emptiness. A druid's stick held betwixt tight fingers, tapping quaintly the ground before and aft. Night brings tired lunation, folly walks the street between Topeth and Spilth Lane. Crushed glass is heard underfoot. Crystals utter dissonance. The houses stand up. The children are sleeping utterly.

The Ukrainians dream ambitiously of the workaday world and labor. The Puerto Ricans dream reddish dreams of terra-cotta madonnas descending stairs. The Chinese dream of large cigars and quiet reputable establishments. The Jews dream of being chased by Jews. The Blacks dream of being chased. The Irish dream of liquor and money. The lower east side is a noise with violent dreams.

Morning staggers in bibulous, bringing old vacant-eyed women foraging through garbage cans. The streaming streets are innocent of blood. The smell of escaping gas is everywhere. The doors are slammed shut, the cars scream. The dead dogs are discovered; there are no rats to be seen.

Along the Bowery, spent men, their bodies in ruin, their mouths awry, gather about the lazar house on 3rd Street. Noon occurs amid watches. The school children noise out of various yards and streets. Four and forty windows reflect the preternatural sun. And now my soul, my stupid soul is so many broken windows. Universes of dying pavements....

The mutative month of the year. The afternoon stumbles toward pointlessness. Epiphanic God sits in laxitive state amid clouds. We, the penitents afoot, speak amongst ourselves awaiting peripety.

Where shall the feet lead? Where shall they lead? Shall we go along St. Marks Place among guilty faces, or toward the dead of Thompkins Square? We shall go hurriedly as though we knew where we were going. As though we knew what we would do when we got there. Avoid the faces, avoid the faces. Look instead upon the Catholic school children in their bright dresses and coats. Beware the old woman speaking to herself as she empties some strange parcel in the gutter. Avoid the gaudy sepulchres that are cars. Keep the eyes steadfastly ahead and furtive. Do not deliberate overlong in the windows of the funeral homes. Or on the crumbling faces of the drug freaks. The police are looking silent, they are waiting silent as certain graves

are silent. Looking on, waiting. Do not go mad yet; that window, do not smash it. The old merchant who looks out sadly, waiting for you to slay him; do not slay him. Keep the hands pocketed. Keep all in a state of calm. All in a state of calm. Had they told you at your birth, or shortly after, while you were being bathed and weaned -- had they told you of the sadness of this place, would you still have kept on living?

Lately in the night, beneath the harlotry of the stars, I sit watching, wondering how long it has been since the death of my grandmother, how long it will be before my death. Wondering what I shall do in the interim. Knowing full well that I have no more choice in these matters than I did in being born. I mark particular instances, having to mark something. The scream I just heard. I do not believe it to have been made by me.

The Catholic priests when they walk go straight as church steeples. Their collars betray a bit of public filth around the rims. I would go to one to confess, if only I had something of some worth to confess. They have not even allowed me the opportunity of atrocity. To be born poor is to be placed in a vacuum of diminutive circumference. I can not kill one million. I have neither the opportunity nor the wherewithal. I can only bring ruin to a small multitude. All of which has already been quite prepared for me. My offensive existence in truth has been charted out to such an absurd degree that were I capable of laughter I would laugh. Here on the lower east side we are children. Children in toy houses. We are fed existence in mouthfuls. We are awakened in morning by the violence of garbage cans (which are never fully emptied yet are an excellent source of annoyance). We are tolerated by the guardians. Allowed our feeble humors. And subsequently squashed if we become overly offensive. We are children. All the poor are children. We are Black children, hence twice children. If man has no freedom then a poor man has less than no freedom. He lives in the shadow of a shadow. His voice is rain-water. His blood is spittle. Lately in the night. Enjoying my allotted rattle. My mad vagaries. My inquietudes. Night unto day, and then night again. Worthless we make night songs.

I have sinned without the remembrance of the sin. I have sinned without the enjoyment of the sin. Days, oppressive and in a cluster. The moiety of these being without respite. Calmness is not for us nor the easement of the day's end. My hands are folded. My house is an ordered house. All is as it was before I existed. Before I was caused to exist. The lewd noise of the wind-slain streets. The footsounds of the nocturnal guard. Something of importance has happened though I forget what. My eyes are before me, myopic mist-brown eyes.

Silence would be merciful. I too have seen a bird fly into a lighted hall. Abide a space, then fly out again with him. Am sitting, am sitting, apart and opposite. And tonight as yesterday, I am alone.

by CLAYTON RILEY

Slave Ship, by LeRoi Jones, is an exploration of life, of living...compelling visions and dreams with rhythms underlining, shaping a route to memory. Poet sounds, voices of the Blood carried up, getting up and out and beyond what is spoken. Celebration of what it all has looked like. Sounds given over to the pulse, and the beating of hearts -- as with noble people, noble spirits.

The ship is one beginning -- not the first -- is an arrival of those gone before, those responsible for what is now. Black is. Black is this beginning. Black lies below decks (*the Middle Passage brought men and women from Africa on the west coast to America on the east coast...* this being the voice of the objective historian who as protector of dream sequences tells you how Europe saved Black people from a life of paganism and backwardness). Black in the hold of the boat designed to make men rich -- that's a fundamental truth -- make men wealthy at the expense not only of some lives but of a LIFE a culture a history a way of...this is a focus, perhaps. And we should know.

What Jones has done is make it unavoidable. Got to face it, I mean here the thing is coming, bigger, more intensified than most dreams will allow, will permit or contain. LOOK directly into the floating prison which has chained up so much more than flesh which is what we must look for...bodies alone cause us grief, what shall we experience beyond that point? All avenues. All paths. What we are exposed to--when *Slave Ship* has moved close to us, into our personal harbor, when we are near to our own vision as shaped by the poet and the players -- is a human portrait completed at levels we avoid when we can, levels frequently too thoroughly expensive in emotional terms for us to engage.

Black boatload. What does the experience sound like, whose language, who is to say what this act

can cause or provoke? I am without my own understanding and accept with difficulty all that I see and hear because this demands a journey past the printed pages in my mind. So I go. Not the best traveler initially. Looking, expecting to understand. Falling at a point, relaxing into the real place which is a feeling...feeling is what will decide this particular success. The sound of the people, the folk, who *were* so we could *be*, is the sound of an anguish, deep soul sound of what we have accepted in a literate framework. (And that only recently.)

Now it is given as an encounter... we must touch and be there. History now is no longer done as highly academic homework with tensor lamps and a bowl of potato chips, with course outlines and gyp sheets (we have all cheated a bit, you know, *all of us*) but as an exercise designed to wrap around us, spill on us, hold us in the grip of handshakes or an arm around, some major or minor embrace. *Slave Ship* speaks in the direction of a new public experience -- no intermission with orange drinks and filter tips -- a drama to exist outside the framework legislated by theatrical commandants who stipulate regulations in text terms, in terms of the last century or beyond, in terms intended to take us back to history instead of bringing it to us. So a new thing. Theater of reflection, theater not afraid of what emerges, who feels what as long as *who* feels. So that if you come to hate what America as a contemporary representation of national purpose is, this is not evil or the active pursuit of distortion, this is a recognition growing out of what comes from within you when you allow yourself time to consider. This is only seeing a system, a SYSTEMATIC, SYSTEMATIZED social order committed to destruction at many ports of call, yours, in fact, topping the roster.

But you have to feel these things, knowing is not enough. When you are moved by the sight of Black men

breaking the barrier aboard ship, below deck, the wall separating them from their families, their women, some of their children, the moment is not an intellectualized account of heroism. These heroic people come from someplace else. And your assessment of them arrives similarly... from someplace else.

When the human cargo, this Black Gold of the day's exchange system, is on land, the terms of life are no different than before. The struggle to survive simply has broader boundaries now, extended complications. How to stay alive, with some measure of dignity when you can be bought/sold, made victim, made dead, tossed aside, torn away from whatever in family terms you were part of. What to do?

Reverend Turner? What we gon' do when the white man comes?

History as challenge and response. To oppose is to make valid the victim's previous existence under any conditions. The gun or other forms of reaction, as in *Slave Ship* with the regal bearing of a Black woman who chooses not to bend easily to her sorrows, as with a man/child sold though his courage remaining intact.

The preacher, the Tom, the memory of African women at rivers, and African warriors on the hunt, blended references and images expanding all around us, upon us, with us. Everything we know. We know betrayals. We know pride. And we know music, this time guiding a perilous but moving voyage, the journey led by Archie Shepp, shaped by Gilbert Moses...all in the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

We know as well that theater must be consistent with the times it informs. America needs theater to work change, theater to overwhelm, to destroy institutional leg irons. *Slave Ship* is a glimpse at theater of unavoidable realities, theater of heart and conscience.

Theater of personal discovery; go and find yourself.

Book Reviews

by James G. Spady

Which Way to Go, by Harold L. Franklin. Philadelphia: EKO Publications, 1969. 134 pp. \$1.75.

There is no doubt about it, this is a very compelling book of essays and short stories, beautiful in its simplicity, gripping, frank and true to life. In short, Franklin's writings move

Which Way to Go is not a book for those who are not interested in hearing the plain truth. Each essay contains succinct lines which make you stop and "dig" yourself. His writings embrace the total Black experience: religion, art, culture, music, etc.

"A look in the mirror. What do you see, Black man? Do you see a boy or do you see a man? What makes a boy and what makes a man? Short pants? Long pants? Which do you wear? Are you a tall boy or a short man? Are you a Black boy or a white man? Or are you both?"

To help you answer that question turn to another essay. "A man who has no real base (land) of his own is a man without a home. He is the bird without wings, the fish without water, the tree that is rootless, and the thinker who is brainless."

...Brainless or whitewashed?

"Education and brainwashing -- the same. Education is the biggest form of brainwashing that exists. Through education we take in all of our brainwashing. This makes it even more important for each race of people to take in the right education and culture."

And the only way Black people can have the proper education for themselves is by building and controlling such institutions deemed necessary for diffusive purposes.

Prof. Charles C. Seifert once said, "A race without knowledge of its history is like a tree without roots." Throughout Franklin's book there is reference to our past history. He uses the past as a foundation upon which to build his future, while at the same time retaining his roots.

In *Which Way to Go*, Harold L.

Franklin uses his talents as both a writer and artist to illustrate the Black experience, for Black people. It is one of the most important "tunes" of recent times. Musically speaking, it's like "Sitting at the Dock of the Bay" with your "Kulu Se Mama."

Bloodline, by Ernest J. Gaines. New York: Dial Press, 1968. 264 pp. \$4.95.

Reading Gaines is like growing up all over again in your grandmother's kitchen, staying awake past bedtime to hear the tales of the elders. There was always an aunt who told brooding stories of funerals and tragic courtships; an uncle who rode the rails a lot...and lied a lot; a great grand-something on your father's side who belonged to the "fool set," as they used to say, who'd scare you to death with spooky tales of haunts. And, too, there would be one with some special gifts, who'd provoke a hush just by saying, "That reminds me of the time I..."

In our house it was a cousin we called Mockin' Bird because, besides being very sarcastic, she had a Geiger counter accuracy about voices and gestures. Picnics, boat-rides, crowd scenes, colossal movies were her specialties. Never once did she have to announce which character she was doing; never once were you ever confused, or even in the least bit of doubt that you knew, but absolutely knew, this person firsthand through some minute, detailed but very definitive gesture or expression Mockin' Bird would make. Like there was this stranger one time on the road heading for the high grass. "I surely don't like that man," Mockin' Bird said. We ran to the window and stared to see what it was about the man that had given him away, what evil lurked in his face, his clothes. But we did not have Mockin' Bird's eyes. She took three steps across the fireplace rug, walking like that man, and suddenly we knew he just had to be a vicious convict on the run and ready for trouble. "If he heads this way,"

my father said, "fetch me my stick!"

Everything about Gaines' work has always reminded me of family: the sureness of his portraits, the keen ear for individual idiosyncrasies of speech, the "at-ease in-no-rush I-know-you-ain't-go ng-nowhere" unraveling of the tale, the intimacy, warmth, detail, the familiarity in the strictest and most general use of that word. He's every good storyteller I've ever heard. But in the same way it took the elders years of telling to perfect, to shape the tale just right, Gaines too is not the "natural" he appears to be. The seemingly unrehearsed, nonchalant, unself-conscious weaving of the story is no improvisation; it is a very careful rendering of an experience. It's just that the agony of pulling the whole thing off is never felt, for Gaines does not inflict his reader with the writer's problems of craft. He does not exhibit his wares or call attention to the well-wrought line, the seductive truth, the witty dialogue, the precisioned insight in that self-conscious way that has become the hallmark of contemporary artistes. Gaines simply does it without neon and trumpets. The pages show no sweat, no erasures. You have to love a writer behind that.

As the title of this collection of five long stories suggests, *Bloodline* is basically about the family. The drama springs from those crucial ties, primary attachments. The setting, atmosphere, selection of characters and design of events are all derived from the familial unit--the small family of husband, wife, child, and a few aunts and elders on the margin; the extended family of blood and kin by marriage; the symbolic family, as in "Three Men." The motif of manhood, the search for manliness, the search for the father, is central to several of the stories and present in some way in all. And its reappearance throughout the book tends to link up the stories and make the collection one book rather than a series of assorted pieces.

One of the stories, "The Sky is Gray," is all about the training of

a young boy by a determined mother. As the story opens, the boy is making a trip to the dentist with his mother--not that he's complained or cried. Certainly not; he knows that they can't afford the trip to town or the payment to the dentist, and he never cries or shows weakness around his mother. But they go. It is a grueling trip in the freezing cold, a wearisome, lonely trip and he is in pain, is afraid his mother is getting mad at him, and is hungry but won't admit it. He'd like to lay down and die for himself or comfort his mother. But she won't play that; she'll have no truck with such sissy stuff. She can't afford any foolishness. When the boy wanted to make a pet of some young birds, she made him kill them for food. Had to beat him, for he wouldn't understand. The army'd taken the father, the man. What would happen to a boy-not-a-man if death should take her? "He has to learn."

After waiting for some time with the throbbing tooth, they are turned out of the office so the dentist can have his lunch. Mother and son walk the lonely, cold, unfamiliar streets looking for the railroad tracks that'll lead them to colored town where maybe they can get a little something to eat for a dime. The whole trip--trying to get warm, trying to get some food, trying to stay out of trouble, trying to kill time till the office opens--is a study in the training of the boy as he awakens to the fact that his mother is a very resourceful and extremely proud woman. As they turn away from a sympathetic old white lady who wants to give them warmth, food, encouragement, and help them make the dental appointment, the rain begins to freeze. But out they go into the street, for Mother accepts no handouts:

*The sleet's coming down heavy,
heavy now, and I turn up my
coat collar to keep my neck
warm. My mama tells me turn
it right back down.*

*"You not a bum," she says.
"You a man."*

-- TONI CADE



I'M
NOT
INVOLVED!!

I'M BEATING OUT
A CALL FOR UNITY---
AND HE SETS THERE-
WITH HIS HANDS
FOLDED!!!

S. HUGER

Letters to the Editor

Genocide

Dear Sir;

I have just completed reading Tafadhali Harabu Himaya's book *Genocide*. I had read Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, but I could not understand much of what I read because of the way it was written. From what I could understand, it tells much of what is happening out here in the streets to the Black people in America. But its intellectual base makes it very hard for a lot of the people I've talked to to understand it because it is about, but isn't for, the Black people who have been kept dumb to all sorts of knowledge, who, most of them, never reached a ninth grade reading level. So the man down here on the corner who probably dropped out of school at the seventh grade or less won't understand what Cleaver was talking about even though it is about him.

Why is it that Black people who write books always write them, it seems, for the appraisal of white critics or at the white people's level of reading? How do these writers expect a man who never had a chance to really learn how to read to pick up a book with words in it long enough to be sentences in themselves, when he can't even understand some of the titles let alone the subject or the contents? The white man already knows what is going on down here and the reasons why. It's the Blacks in the neighborhoods called ghettos or slums that need to know what is happening to them. These people -- the Black people--are the ones who weren't taught anything about genocide in the schools.

Mr. Cleaver says much the same things as Mr. Himaya -- or for the that matter, much the same things any book showing today as today has to say. They all talk about the problem we in America and the entire nonwhite world are faced with: genocide. But I didn't really know very much about genocide until I read Mr.

Himaya's book. Mr. Himaya wrote *Genocide* using the words that the Black people of America use every day, which makes it pretty easy to understand and relate to the present. By the time I finished reading the last word of *Genocide* I knew what genocide was all about, why the white man hurried H. Rap Brown off the streets when he first said something about it.

The white man is destroying the nonwhite peoples around the world through his disguised methods of genocide. The white man had this same kind of war against the American Indians. We would do well to study how they were decimated almost to the point of total extinction, for the Geronimos and the Crazy Horses of yesterday are the Panthers, Carmichaels and Malcolm X's of today.

There is so much truth in *Genocide* that it scares you to see it yourself. But if, after reading it, you can't see what is coming to this country, then you are either blind or don't want to see. You are either looking and not seeing, or seeing and not looking.

Robert L. Gordon, Jr.
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir;

There is a mass genocide program directed toward the Africans here in America. If one understands the meaning and function of genocide, then it is easy to understand why I refer to us as Africans, because that's exactly what we are whether we want to be or not....

Africans here in America should read *Genocide*, by T. H. Himaya, because it's every bit of the truth. When you look at what he's talking about, it's so plain that you can't turn your head away from it saying that it isn't happening here, because it is here and it's going to stay here as long as the situation allows it to or until we as a whole do something

to change it.

Bruce Taylor
Chicago, Ill.

Land Grants for Black Communities

To the Editor:

"Land Grants for Black Communities," by W. H. Banks (*LIBERATOR*, October 1969) was a thought-provoking essay. I hope that your magazine will feature more articles on the vital subject of economic development in and of Black communities.

While I am in substantial agreement with the main thrust of Mr. Banks' essay, I think that he leaves some fundamental questions unanswered and/or undefined. For example, he states, and I think accurately, that "poverty is the absence of general economic participation rather than simply a low level of employment." But, at the same time, his proposed solution to the economic problems of the Black community, the Revenue Grant Community Foundation, does not--in the slightest degree--deal with that circumstance. The Revenue Grant Foundation, as defined in the essay, represents a purely internal mechanism which will not, indeed, cannot have any effect on the fundamental external causes of community poverty.

Thus Mr. Banks is correct when he asserts that "all simple individual ownership would do...is enlarge the affluent and mobile class within the context of the poor community." But the Revenue Grant Foundation is in fact a form of individual ownership, for its purpose is nonprofit in only a purely technical sense: in that the goal of its trustees is to function for (and who defines that?) the community rather than to be responsible to the community. The trustees, not the community, control and--yes--own the Revenue Grant Foundation. We know just who will benefit primarily from the Foundation: the same affluent, mobile class within the Black community that has always benefited from such enterprises.

Another issue presented by Mr. Banks in his seminal essay, but one not faced forthrightly, is that of community internal investment. The author proposes that professional fund managers (most assuredly white because there are not too many Black ones around) be hired to "invest surplus (where from?) community foundation (not community, *period*) funds outside of the community." Today, is not the thrust toward building Black communities through the retention of funds within those communities? If funds generated within Black communities are invested outside the communities, how can we maintain that the pattern differs significantly from that currently in practice? Funds generated within Black communities have always been invested and/or spent outside those communities to their detriment and impoverishment.

And since the Revenue Grant Foundation is not responsible for community improvement *per se*, but rather solely for business type function, I dare say that the principal concern of the trustees, the owners, as for any businessmen, would be "what's best for business," not what would be best for the community. Thus the Foundation would reflect the same dollar and cost conscious attitudes found in any other business.

Mr. Banks rightly asserts that poverty stems from the lack of general economic participation by the masses of Black Americans. And, indeed, the Revenue Grant Foundation can serve as a mechanism for mobilizing funds to aid the "affluent and mobile class within the context of the poor community" which is not *per se* a bad objective, but it cannot affect the causes of the ghetto dweller's poverty which result from, as Mr. Banks so forcefully pinpoints, his "disenfranchisement from the rapid... growth of the general American economy...."

Oliver L. Henry
Cambridge, Mass.

AGENTS WANTED TO SELL **LIBERATOR** LIBERAL COMMISSIONS

For Further Information:
Write to: **LIBERATOR**
244 East 46 St., N.Y., N.Y., 10017

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

ATTACH ADDRESS LABEL HERE

Print name, new address and Zip
Code below. Mail to **LIBERATOR**
244 East 46 Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10017

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____

5 Compelling Reasons Why You Should Subscribe To **LIBERATOR**

1. Each month, **LIBERATOR's** compelling approach to journalism has made it the only magazine of its kind today.
2. Issue after issue **LIBERATOR** commands the immediate attention of all Americans.
3. We not only report news, we help make news.
4. We bring you penetrating analysis of trends in Afro-American communities, and in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
5. **LIBERATOR** - Tough magazine to ignore - if you want to keep up with a changing world.

SUBSCRIBE NOW 12 issues \$3.00

LIBERATOR

244 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y., 10017

Please enroll me as a subscriber for:

☐ one year, \$3.00 or, ☐ two years, \$5.50

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

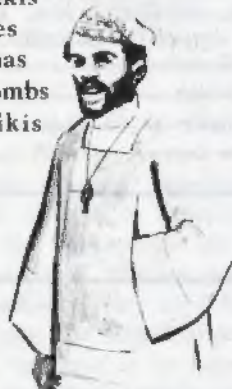
☐ Payment enclosed

The above rates will be in effect only until January 1, 1970.

ASHANTI FASHIONS*

2236 - 7TH AVE. N. Y., N. Y. 10027 212-266-3943

- Buba-Lappa Sets
- Dansikis
- Geles
- Filaas
- Combs
- Tikis



WHOLESALE • RETAIL • MAIL ORDER
• New Brochure Available •

**MAIL EARLY
IN THE DAY!**



MR. ZIP
**ZIP CODE NUMBERS
BELONG**

IN ALL ADDRESSES



YOUR POSTMASTER

New From

DRUM and SPEAR PRESS...

A HISTORY OF PAN-AFRICAN REVOLT

by
C. L. R. JAMES

This book is an important assessment of Black Rebellion against American oppression and for Liberation in Africa and the West Indies.

Unavailable for many years, Drum and Spear Press is publishing this classic work in an expanded and revised paper-bound edition.

A HISTORY OF PAN-AFRICAN REVOLT should be a standard selection in Black Studies.

160 pp with Index \$2.50 Paper
Available wherever Paperbacks are sold

Drum and Spear Press

2001 Eleventh Street, N.W.
Suite 206
Washington, D. C. 20001



BLACK STUDIES

AFRICA

BLACK ARTS

LIBERATOR

244 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y., 10017

RETURN REQUESTED

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Brooklyn, N.Y.
PERMIT NO. 7379

PERIODICAL LIBRARIAN
PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON ST

THIRD CLASS MAIL